

VLR-1/20/81 NRHP-7/26/82

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wood Hall

and/or common Milton Hall (Preferred)

2. Location

street & number State Route 600

N/A not for publication

city, town Callaghan

N/A vicinity of

congressional district 6th (M. Caldwell Butler)

state Virginia

code 51

county Alleghany

code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Mary Dudley Dowdy

street & number RFD 1, Box 414

city, town Roanoke

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia 24012

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alleghany County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Covington

state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

(1) Historic American Buildings
title Survey Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1958

☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington

state D. C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Milton Hall, also known as Wood Hall and Oak Hall, is a picturesque Gothic Revival-style residence sited on a terrace overlooking Johnson's Creek off Route 600 in Alleghany County. The house's rural setting is enhanced by a small wooded mountain that rises immediately to the rear (west) of the house, providing a lush background of trees. The double-pile, two-story, brick house was executed in 1874 in random five-to seven-course-American-bond brick above a stuccoed brick water table.

The front (east) elevation contains the main entrance, prefaced by a two-story, gable-roof entrance tower. The deeply projecting tower has clasping buttresses and pointed-arch openings topped by finely executed corbeled brick hood molds. The porch's second story has an oriel window on the main elevation with three-part casement windows on the north and south walls. The windows are sheltered by shallow hipped roofs that project from the eaves course. The treatment is repeated on the north elevation. The porch's gable roof is flanked by large cross gables with decorative scrolled wooden vergeboards, pendants, and hip knobs. The treatment is repeated on the gables of the north and south elevations. The structure is covered by a gable roof with cross gables. The roof is covered by tin executed in an embossed pattern. A servants' wing, extending to the rear, is also covered by a gable roof. Milton Hall is fortunate in the preservation of its picturesque corbeled brick chimneys with divided stacks.

The main entrance consists of double doors with pointed-arch lights flanked by pointed-arch sidelights. Fenestration consists of one-, two-, and three-part casement windows with clear-glass transoms topped by corbeled brick hood molds. The window casements appear to be original.

The interior of Milton Hall is rather plain, suggesting that the house was meant to be embellished inside with decorative wallpaper, carpets, and draperies. The house has a central-hall plan which contains the main stair. A secondary stair is contained in a lateral rear hall that connects the servants' quarters with the main part of the house. The open-well, open-string main stair has scroll-sawn brackets, a paneled spandrel, a molded handrail, and a turned newel. A baseboard runs the length of the stair to the second floor. The hall contains a plain mantel. The main parlor and dining room are located to the south of the main stair. Both rooms are connected by sliding doors and retain their original simply executed mantels and baseboards. The den and sitting room are located to the north of the hall. The rooms are connected by a pointed-arch opening that was recently rediscovered, having been blocked in a remodeling. The northeast parlor mantel has been removed, while the northwest den retains its simply executed mantel. The present kitchen was originally an arcaded porch that has been enclosed. The original servants' quarters have been converted into a separate apartment. The second-floor bedrooms retain their plain mantels.

A former caretaker's cottage survives east of the main house as the only original outbuilding. It has been renovated for use as a garage and residence. While the original landscape plan is lost, bushes and trees survive around the main house. A number of rustic cottages have been erected on the original estate.

RCC

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1874	Builder/Architect	unknown
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Nestled among the mountains in a remote corner of western Virginia, Milton Hall stands as an expression of a renewed British interest in new-world real estate that developed immediately after the Civil War. During that period, many upper-class Britons acquired property in this country, especially in the South, for either investment or relief from the British climate. This distinctly English-looking Gothic villa was erected in 1874 for William Wentworth FitzWilliam, Viscount Milton, whose wife, Lady Laura Milton, brought him to Alleghany County for his health. Architecturally, Milton Hall is significant as a late use of the Gothic Revival mode, illustrating the lingering popularity of the style among the British after it passed from fashion for rural residences in this country. With its many gables, buttressed porch tower, and Gothic trimmings, the house presents an exotic contrast to its rustic surroundings.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The interest among the British in American property, particularly in the Southern states in the late 19th century, was pinpointed by an English journalist of the time:

...it was the country for the moment for the educated Englishman... it possessed, moreover, a flavor of romance, due partly...to British upper-class sympathy for the South during the war. Here, then, was a ready-made country, occupied indeed for two or three centuries with commodious homesteads and smooth-lying open lands selling for what then seemed...a mere song.¹

Thus, the purchase of 130 acres of land in western Virginia's Alleghany County for Lady and Lord Milton, both members of the British educated class, was not so unusual as one might suppose. Lady Milton reportedly felt that the climate and atmosphere would be beneficial to the health of her invalid husband.

Milton Hall stands on property west of Covington, where in the late 18th century a tavern was established by Dennis Callaghan to serve travelers heading west through the Alleghenies. It was sold with 130 acres in 1873 to a trustee for Lady Milton. A plat made for the sale shows the tavern buildings along with a schoolhouse at the southwest corner of the parcel. Shortly after the arrival of the new owners, the tavern building burned, and in the following year the present house, Milton Hall, first called Wood Hall, was built.

The architect of Milton Hall unfortunately is unknown. Although the house is definitely an American fabrication, the basic scheme could have been prepared by a British architect or derived from British pattern books, either of which is likely under the circumstances. The lack of anything similar in the region would certainly suggest that local talent was

9. Major Bibliographical References

Alleghany County Deed Book 6, pp. 761-763 (1873); Land Tax Books, 1850-1875.
Arritt, Gay. "Milton Hall Has Varied History," Covington Virginian, November 13, 1972.
Bradley, Arthur G. Other Days, Recollections of Rural England and Old Virginia, 1860-88.
London, 1913.
Draper, Betty C. "Old Milton Hall in Alleghany County," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1938.

10. Geographical Data

(Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives --
Alleghany County Scrapbook)

Acree of nominated property 1½ acres

Quadrangle name Callaghan, Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 1 7 5 8 1 6 4 0 4 1 8 5 6 2 0
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning on W side of service road, about 950' N of I-64 and about 1,100' W of intersection of VA 600 and VA 661; thence extending about 350' S along W side of service road; thence about 300' W to 1,440' contour; thence about 300' N along said contour; thence about 200' E to point of origin.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date January 1981

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell
title H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 10 1982

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only	
received	
date entered	

Milton Hall, Alleghany County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 6,7,8

Page 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1969, 1979 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property for Milton Hall is 1½ acres. The tract, a fraction of the 1873 parcel of 130 acres, is drawn to include the main house, an outbuilding, and former garden sites. The original acreage has been subdivided.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

not relied on for the design. Also, the very sober, almost bleak character of the architecture is much more in the spirit of the British Gothic Revival than the lighter, more festive American approach to the style. In any case, by the 1870s the Gothic style was rarely used for American domestic architecture but remained quite popular in Great Britain, a fact that further reinforces the notion that Milton Hall's design came from across the Atlantic. The interior detailing, however, is rather ordinary, being what one would expect in any middle-size Virginia house of the period. So while the exterior is a reflection of imported taste, the interior apparently was left to local craftsmen.

Lady Milton returned to England on two occasions to obtain furnishings for her new home and, when it was completed, gave a grand ball to which many area residents were invited. The titled couple were local celebrities during their brief stay in Alleghany County. In 1877 the Miltons returned to England, and Lord Milton died the same year at age 37 at Rouen in France. Lady Milton returned once more to her Virginia home in 1883 and remained about a year. She died in 1884 after returning to England. The property was left to Lady Milton's two sisters.

In 1889 Milton Hall was purchased by Captain H. E. W. Rumbold, also a native of England. A former captain of the Essex Rifles and veteran of the Crimean War, Rumbold witnessed the Charge of the Light Brigade, made famous by Tennyson's poem. For most of the 20th century the property was owned by Hugh M. McAllister, a local historian who installed modern conveniences but retained the interior woodwork and fireplaces. The present owner is Mrs. Mary Dudley Dowdy.

MTP/RCC

¹Bradley, A. G., Other Days, Recollections of Rural England and Old Virginia, 1860-1880 (London, 1913), pp. 254-256.



USGS 7.5' Quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Callaghan, Va. 1966

MILTON HALL, Alleghany County, Virginia
UTM References:

17/581640/4185620

